Compulsory HIV/AIDS Tests before marriage

350. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry is considering any proposal to make HIV/AIDS test compulsory before marriage in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Compulsory testing for HIV is not recommended on ethical grounds. However, voluntary testing is encouraged.

To uphold human dignity and in the interest of human rights, no compulsion is forced as a matter of policy by the Government of India.

Illegal foetus testing machines

351. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many foetus testing machines are being operated without any licence;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering to take any specific steps to check this; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (c) Sex of the foetus can be detected by various methods. The ultrasound machines/scanners/imaging machines are most commonly used for this purpose. The Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 prohibits determination and disclosure of sex of the foetus. Clinics using pre-natal diagnostic techniques like ultrasound machines are required to get themselves registered under the Act so as to discourage and discontinue their use for detection of sex of the foetus during pregnancy. A large number of clinics/ institutes using such machines are not registered under this Act taking the plea that they are not using these machines for detection of sex of foetus.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

However, there is nothing to confirm that they are not actually doing so. Accordingly, the Supreme Court of India in its Order dated 11th December, 2001 had directed that information relating to buyers of ultrasound machines may be obtained from the manufacturers, importers, suppliers etc. of such machines.

A list of over 11,000 buyers of ultrasound machines received from the suppliers has already been passed on to the States/UTs for ensuring the registration of clinics at the addresses cited under the said PNDT Act, and for prosecution of those who may be found misusing these machines for detection of sex of foetus.

In a subsequent order dated 29th January, 2002 the Supreme Court has directed the sealing and seizure of ultrasound machines/scanners used by organizations not registered under the said Act. All the States and UTs have been advised to take immediate necessary steps to implement these directives.

Medical facilities for psycho patients

†352. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that adequate attention is not being paid towards medical facilities for psycho patients in the country;

(b) if so, whether Government will seriously consider to provide adequate facilities to them; and

(c) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (c) There are over 18,000 beds for pshychiatric patients spread across 37 Government mental hospitals in the country and about 3500 beds located in general hospitals/hospitals affiliated to medical colleges. Availability of pshychotropic drugs is satisfactory and the cost of such drugs is reasonable/affordable. Under the National Mental Health Programme, the Government has already initiated a pilot programme named the District Mental Health Programme, which is currently being implemented in 25 districts covering 20 States and Union Territories. Its aim is to identify persons suffering from various mental disorders and epilepsy and manage that at the primary health care centre and district level by trained doctors and with the active support of the families and the community in which the mental patient lives. A proposal for comprehensive mental health programme during the Xth Plan, including components of improving

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.